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1983 -- BEST YEAR SINCE 1979 FOR HOME APPLIANCES

CHICAGO -- "Over 32.4 million major household appliances were shipped in 1983 setting two all-time records -- the greatest annual unit increase (5.7 million) and percentage increase (21.4%)," notes Robert Holding, president of the Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers (AHAM). "It's the best year the industry's had since 1979 when we shipped over 33 million units."

The turnaround in the economy, a high level of consumer confidence and a revived new housing market were the chief factors influencing 1983's dramatic increase in shipments over the previous year.

"We expect these positive factors to continue through most of 1984, keeping major appliance shipments at near-record levels. In fact," said Holding, "our 1984 forecast of 33.7 million units would make it the second best year in the industry's history."

1983 closed on a high note for total shipments -- with a record-breaking December (2.5 million units) and a fourth quarter (8.3 million units). Compared to the same periods last year, shipments were ahead 34% in December and 31.1% during the fourth quarter.

New annual records were established in 1983 for microwave ovens (6.1 million units) and disposers (3.5 million units). Many products made remarkable annual gains, with increases exceeeding 20% for disposers,

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